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School Committee Minutes 05/08/2007

Approved on May 22, 2007

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2007
7:30 PM

Present: Susan Lovelace, Chair
Sean Garballey, Vice Chair
Jeff Thielman, Secretary
Denise Burns
Joe Curran
Sue Sheffler
Ronald Spangler

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Chief Financial Off Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Reps.: Ella Hartenian

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Caryn Gillis/ Anne Albertazzi read a letter regarding the follow-up to the letter, which was sent to the Arlington School Committee members on April 9, 2007 with regards of the Principal Clerk position being eliminated.

Debra Rose Brillati spoke on the process of CTDS, stated her concerns with new program, and wants to make sure the program will be replicated as is and not dismantled.

CONSENT AGENDA: - all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence

**Approval of warrant # 07145 in the amount of \$554,434.72*

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

PARMENTER / CROSBY DECISION

Ms. Burns, Chair of the Community Relations Subcommittee updated the School Committee members on the subcommittee's recommendation at their last meeting on May 4, 2007 on how to proceed with regards to these buildings and a motion was made.

*On a motion by Ms. Burns seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to extend the Crosby and Parmenter buildings as surplus until 2011, with the understanding that over the next 1-2 years:
The town will examine the potential value of the buildings and the school committee will examine the long-term school use of those buildings.
Vote 7 – 0 unanimous*

FY 2008 BUDGET APPROVAL

Ms. Lovelace summarized the budget stages and reviewed how difficult it has been to get where we are today over the past several months.

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Burns it was
Voted to move approval of the Budget of FY 08 with the additional amendments.
Vote 6- 1, Motion passed.*

Roll Call, Mr. Spangler Yes, Ms. Sheffler Yes, Mr. Curran, No, Ms. Burns, Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Garballey, Yes, Ms. Lovelace Yes

Supt. Levenson proposed the budget revisions based on input received to keep the budget in balance. The primary drivers were to keep fee increases down, keep money in the classroom, no further reduction at the middle school beyond the original 2.5 FTE's and steps to improve future budgets.

Additions to the recommended budget are to add in Social Studies Department Head, add extra curricular activities fee K-12 \$50/year paid only once, family cap of \$675 for all fees paid, excluding full day kindergarten. Add \$10 to each cost of each high school sport. \$210 for first

sport, \$160 for second sport, and \$135 for third sport.

Remove from the budget was to remove ACE fees, remove fee for performing arts, and to create a shared town and school data processing department, and reduce professional development by \$7,186 district wide.

Mr. Hutchinson went over the Middle School Staffing Reductions and noted the recommended changes are due to budget constraints and was made with Principal Bouris and Department Chairs that were impacted by the changes; Ms. Bodie, Ms. Sumner, Mr. Smith, Ms. Bouvier, and Mr. Tassone and Ms. Villano.

This implementation had to take place when budget revisions were suggested. Ms. Sheffler and Mr. Garballey are in agreement that core subjects, such as world language, should not be affected and questioned how class size would not increase with cuts in music, drama, FACS, literacy lab and ACE science. Also noted by Mr. Spangler the impact on how 8th graders will miss out on not participating in drama but appreciated the Technology department intergrading with the Science department and devoting more computer technology time. Ms. Bouris was asking for transparency from the school committee in the budget in regards to a lead teacher position at the Ottoson Middle School and questioned if this position will continue as done in the past. It was recommended by Ms. Lovelace that this matter with the lead teacher be taken up with Supt. Levenson and is out of School Committees hands.

Mr. Curran handed out his comments on the budget review and presented his recommendations for the Budget approval.

On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Thielman

It was motioned to amend the current budget by reducing revenues and fees by amount of \$246,000. The reduction in revenue represents the elimination of user fees for Extracurricular Performing Arts at \$21,000, the elimination of user fees for ACE programs at \$43,000, and the elimination of user fees for Athletic User fees at \$182,000. Further to propose that the Superintendent offset the elimination of these user fees by reducing administrative staff at the High School. Reducing the number of guidance counselors, freezing the Athletic Director position at half time, and eliminating a Dean and secretary will easily offset the \$246,000 amount.

Mr. Skidmore was not in any way in favor of Mr. Curran's amendment and Ms. Bouvier also noted the Guidance Counselors full caseloads and she said parents in town are very happy how the counselors go above and beyond for each student.

On a motion by Mr. Curran to amend the motion by reducing the budget by \$175,000 and keep status quo on athletic fees and maintain users fees

Vote: 1 in favor and 6 oppose, Motion fails.

On a motion by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Curran

It was voted that we direct the Director of Purchasing/Cost Containment that the job description for the cost containment person be designed with the intent that this person would also look at advertising sales as an increase of his value over the 100K he/she is expected to save through cost containment and the policy and procedures subcommittee would develop a policy to be followed on selling advertisement.
Vote 7-0 unanimous

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler to amend the previous motion to add this to Policy and Procedures subcommittee to advertise space on the score board

Vote 7-0 unanimous

Members asked questions on if fees are not collected through out the school year, would a teacher position be cut. Do other communities have Cost Containment positions? Cuts related to Academic support?

Supt. Levenson stated expenses are growing faster than revenue and every year gets worse, we have 12 cuts this year and 10 positions saved and continue to state that we need to continue to save money.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey and seconded by Mr. Curran it was

Voted to have a report to be brought back in February of 08 on Academics Supports and other
Vote 7-0 unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Ms. Burns it was

Voted that the Superintendent provide a detailed list of the existing General Ledger Accounts to be used in tracking the cost savings deriving from the oversight of the new Director of Purchasing position, and That the Superintendent provide a running total of spending within these G/L Accounts, as compared to budgeted amounts, on a monthly basis through the 2008 fiscal year.
Vote 7-0 unanimously

Supt. Levenson feels this is the right thing to do and is in favor of this. Ms. Sheffler noted a quarterly report would be okay, but Supt. Levenson said monthly would be fine.

UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

B.J. Cataldo, Director of Special Education informed the School Committee Members on the progress and how proud of the department she is. The DOE and Special Education have worked out 30 or so DOE complaints and Ms. Cataldo acknowledge that was due to the staff working to improve timelines, the help of TAT team, 504 fewer mediations, and computers at home and the staff is working well and the department is at 83% compliance and how in the past this was only in the single digits.

Ellette DiPietro and Nancy Campbell spoke about the programs Arlington Public Schools have and how new programs will be implemented. A hand out of New Programs for School Year 07-08 included:

- **Pathways, K-5 to provide services for moderate cognitive challenges**
- **Connections, K-5 to provide services for significant cognitive challenges**
- **Arlington Therapeutic Program K-5 brought in house for mild-moderate special needs**
- **Arlington Therapeutic Program (formerly CLASS, 9-12 currently AYCC**
- **Transitional Kindergarten**
- **Language Based Learning Disabilities K-5, and 6-8**
- **Therapeutic Program 6-8**
- **Transitional Learning Center 6-8**
- **Pathways (formerly Life Skills 6-8 and 9-12**
- **Therapeutic Resource room 9-12**

Mr. Thielman congratulated Ms. Cataldo and all her staff on the accomplishments of the department. Ms. Burns and Mr. Garballey commented on the programs that will be brought in house and asked about the operational cost and the process on how these plans had taken place. Supt. Levenson stated providing in house programs will save us millions, over time, for not going out of district and will reduce transportation costs. The parents are happy that the Arlington Public Schools will be able to provide services for their children in town.

On a motion by Ms. Burns seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to move the Superintendent to submit to the School Committee a proposed process for managing change that would specify who is involved in the process, when and how while investigating other options, to and at the point a decision is made to and how that decision is communicated) so that the superintendent, school committee, and the community would have a model by which to hold Superintendent accountable for following in the future by time certain, Sept 1, 2007.

Vote 7-0 unanimous

Jerry Kupperschmidt spoke about the School Based Counseling Services. It is the mission on the Arlington Public Schools District to work with the “whole child” by making it possible for every student to have access to the general education. The School based counseling will:

- Help support students with access to the general curriculum
- Help create a more positive and safe school experience.
- Assist the district identifying psychological approaches for prevention.
- Provide classroom support and intervention
- Provide short-term treatment
- Define counseling goals and develop measurable treatment plans.
- Facilitate communication between students, faculty and families.
- Provide a link between school and community resources.
- Provide crisis intervention

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Levenson referred to the Superintendents Report in the School Committees packet dated on May 4, 2007.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

Mr. Thielman reviewed correspondence from Ms. Anne Mazzolla on athletic fees, The First Annual Career Fair, Metco Alerts, Invitation to new exhibit to celebrate 200th and letter from Mr. Joe Tully, the McCabe family and emails from ACE parents. Ms. Holton submitted a letter to Superintendent as well as School Committee members regarding Special Education Vision of Achievement.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Garballey it was

Voted to move that the School Committee direct the Superintendent and the new Special Education Director to meet with Ms. Holton and other staff to hear their concerns and to take their views into account when drafting the Special Education Vision Statement

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was

Voted to move Mr. Joe Tully correspondence to Legal Council

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Curran asked the School Committee to send correspondence to Mr. John Hanley who has been inducted into the Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame and to Senior AHS student Luke Heffernan who was named to the All-State All-Academic Hockey Team.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Curran it was

Voted to adjourn at 10:50 P.M.

Vote 7 – 0 unanimous

Submitted by

Karen Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

School Committee